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Jubal Early's Last Stand

A FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY WAR STORY

Copyright, 1906, by G. L. Kilmer.) FTER Sheridan's defeat of the Confederates in the Shenandoah valley led by General Jubal Early, Grant revived the plan to have the principal force of Federals in that region transferred to Petersburg to take part in the siege operations there. In December General Robert E. Lee recalled from Early's command the entire Second Confederate corps, and Grant ordered the Sixth Federal corps to join him on the James. At the beginning of 1865 Sheridan had with him in the valley one division of the Nineteenth infantry corps and 10,-000 sabers. The cavalry was led by General Wesley Merritt, with General Custer and General Devin commanding divisions of 5,000 men each.

Attempts had been made in Decem-

Rosser with their troopers to rally at Staunton, For the protection of Lynchburg Early ordered the infantry brigade of General Echols to come up from southwestern Virginia and prepare to resist Sheridan at that point. There were no troops in Staunton except a local provost guard and a company of boys under eighteen years of

Rosser drummed up a hundred of his troopers and attempted to hold up Sheridan a few miles below Staunton, but he was swept aside, and on March 1 the enemy was at the gates of the town. General Early set out for Waynesboro, picking up Wharton's two brigades of infantry and Nelson's artillery on the way and taking post on a ridge facing west just outside of the town. The general said that his object in taking position at Waynesboro was to cover the removal from that ber, 1864, by Sheridan to carry out place of five pieces of artillery which Grant's wish that he strike the Virbad no teams and some stores still in



CUSTER'S CAVALRY CHARGING EARLY'S LINE AT WAYNESBORO.

the transfer man. 'Phone 2211 Black, ginia Central railroad in the vicinity of of Sheridan's more toward Staunton sville and isolate Lynchburg from Richmond and Petersburg. Two forces under General Torbert and General Custer moved up the valley, but Custer was checked by Confederate cavalry under the noted General Rosser, and Torbert met with determined resistance at Gordonsville. The campaign took place during a winter storm, and the roads were slippery with ice. The expedition proved that the campaigning season in the valley was ended, and Sheridan's troops went into winter quarters, not to emerge until the end of February.

The 27th of February Sheridan again started up the valley from Winchester under orders from Grant to destroy the Virginia Central railroad and the James river canal, then capture Lynchburg and make his way across the enemy's country to Sherman in North Carolina or return to Winchester. On striking Staunton, where General Early had passed the winter, Sheridan found it abandoned by the Confederate troops, who had taken post at Waynesboro, about fifteen miles east of Staunton and near Rockfish gap, in the Blue

At the beginning of the year General Early had a consultation with General Lee at Richmond, and it was decided to keep up the appearance of a large force in the valley by a skillful manipulation of the small command remaining out of the force which had met Sheridan at Cedar creek. The great drought of 1864, supplemented by the torch applied by Sheridan, left no forage for the cavalry and artillery horses, and they had to be sent elsewhere for the winter. Early retained Wharton's division of infantry and Nelson's battalion of artillery. The partisan rangers under the noted McNell and Woodson scattered over the country to subsist themselves. Major Harry Gilmor's raiding band was sent to the line of the Baltimore and Ohfo railroad for a field of exploit, but Gilmor was surprised and captured before he had time to repeat his daring raids of the previous

Toward the close of February one of Gilmor's bands, led by young Jesse McNeil, son of the captain of McNeil's rangers, made a swoop across the Potomac to Cumberland, Md., and carried off General George Crook and General Kelly as prisoners of war. At the beginning of winter Early had sent the cavairy division of Fitz Lee back to the army defending petersburg. General Rosser's division was disbanded emporarily, the troopers going home words with their mounts to subsist themselves. The cavalry division of General Lômax was retained in the field and distributed through the mountain count of Staupton.

General Early received due warning and promptly summoned Lomax and Waynesboro and to show a bold front to Sheridan until he could ascertain the object of the Federal movement. He had but 1,000 muskets in line and six guns and did not intend to make his lest stand at that time. By holding the enemy in check until night be hoped to get his troops behind Rockfish gap and compel Sheridan to fight for the route to Gordonsville.

Sheridan sent General Custer with three brigades to attack the ridge held by Early, and the Confederate leader rode to the front just in time to see Custer's leading detachment hurled back on the road to Staunton by the fire of Nelson's guns. Custer maneuvered for some hours out of the range of the Confederate artillery, and late in the afternoon one brigade passed around to Early's left, where Wharton's infantry was guarding the line. A message from Early to Wharton to be alert did not reach that officer, and his troops gave back in disorder under Custer's attack. Unfortunately for Early, Custer's advancing line could not be seen by the artillery, and little opposition could be offered to the bold Federal advance.

Custer's flank detachment having distracted the enemy at the front he sent a brigade on a charge up the ridge. This charge was headed by the Eighth New York and the First Connecticut cavalry, these two regiments sweeping through all opposition and breaking Early's last line of defense in the warfare of the Shenandoah valley. Custer's prizes were all of Early's wagons and subsistence, tents, gunand battleflags and 1,600 prisoners, including sick and wounded noncom-

When Early saw Wharton's infantry giving way he rode to the bridge over South river leading to Rockfish gap, hoping to rally his men and check Federal pursuit at that point. But the men could not be rallied, and Custer's troopers forded the stream and got in the rear of the Confederates Early in person, with his staff, started for the woods and narrowly escaped capture, but succeeded in getting through to Gordonsville, where Wharton joined him. Part of his late command repaired to Petersburg and part railled at Lynchburg, where Early later took command. Sheridan destroyed the caual and railroad, as directed by Grant, but did not attempt to capture Lynchburg nor to ride through to Sherman's

army in North Carolina. GEORGE L. KILMER

Filial Piety. Mother-Do you like my new gown, Millicent? Millicent (aged five, with conviction)-If there is a lady god, you look just like her in those clothes.-Life. BEGGARS' APPEALS.

How the Professionals Base Them on the Public's Emotions. Never do panhandlers make the mis-

take of appealing to the reason. The emotions of the crowd only are attacked. There is always a complete human story in the pose. What, for instance, could be more compelling of sympathy than the spectacle of the bent old graybeard patiently and despairingly as it seemed grinding a into a broken down baby carriage? The suggestiveness of that perambulator. coupled with the walls of that organ, more forlorn than mortal child ever uttered, was worth dollars a day to the old fellow. It was reprehensible art, of course, but art nevertheless. And the artist grew rich, for when investigated by the police he was found to be the owner of many houses in Ho boken.

Agnin, could there be anything more likely to excite compassion than the crust throwing trick? It was invented by a German beggar named Lang. whose French disciple, Lemaire, practiced it subsequently. I have seen a crust thrower operating in Sixth avenue. He was a semi-well dressed man. who walked swiftly down through the crowds of shoppers. Suddenly he uttered a hoarse cry and darted out into the roadway, where, pouncing upon a crust of bread which he had thrown there previously, he began gnawing it ravenously. He did not wait for sympathy. He walked rapidly away, but a number of women who saw the act ran after him and crowded one another for the privilege of giving him money. Theodore Waters in Everybody's

Concett of the Rooster.

Were it not for the disgusting self conceit of the roosters one might enjoy a poultry show. The rooster is near to nature's heart. He has not civilization enough to veneer his opinions with common politeness and savoir faire, and his disgusting exhibition of the art of being it offends good taste and refinement. How the hen man ages to put up with it is certainly one of the mysteries of the coop. If six or eight hens would join a hens' club modeled after Sorosis and throw the rooster down good and bard once or twice, he would soon discover that he was not the only kernel on the cob.-Minneapolis Journal.

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